



From the Oven to the Table: Simple dishes that look after themselves

Diana Henry

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THE SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLER

'For bung-it-in-the-oven cooks everywhere, this is a must-have book: Diana Henry has a genius for flavour.' - Nigella Lawson

Whether you're short of time or just prefer to keep things simple, *From the Oven to the Table* shows how the oven can do much of the work that goes into making great food.

Diana Henry's favourite way to cook is to throw ingredients into a dish or roasting tin, slide them in the oven and let the heat behind that closed door transform them into golden, burnished meals. Most of the easy-going recipes in this wonderfully varied collection are cooked in one dish; some are ideas for simple accompaniments that can be cooked on another shelf at the same time.

From quick after-work suppers to feasts for friends, the dishes are vibrant and modern and focus on grains, pulses and vegetables as much as meat and fish. With recipes such as Chicken Thighs with Miso, Sweet Potatoes & Spring Onions, Roast Indian-spiced Vegetables with Lime-Coriander Butter, and Roast Stone Fruit with Almond and Orange Flower Crumbs, Diana shows how the oven is the most useful bit of kit you have in your kitchen.

Praise for *How to Eat a Peach* :

'This is an extraordinary piece of food writing, pitch perfect in every way. I couldn't love anyone who didn't love this book.' - Nigella Lawson

'...her best yet...superb menus evoking place and occasion with consummate elegance' - *Financial Times*

Food Book of the Year at the André Simon Food & Drink Book Awards 2019

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Kristin says

Not exactly what I had in mind. You don't just throw a bunch of stuff in a pan and roast it here. Plus, like half the dishes feature huge cuts of lamb, which isn't that easy to come by at stupid places like Giant Eagle. In Britain, where this author is from, it's like its own food group. Lots of sausages, too. Humorously, the author has a recipe for sausage and peppers, the title of which she writes out in Italian. That must be exotic cuisine over there, because that's a basic expectation at every Italian-American social event. Nice to leaf through but disappointing.

Mellie Antoinette says

My idea of a perfect Sunday is lying about with a cookbook close by. Diana Henry is always a go-to favorite (even though her books always feature typos). The good is simple and most importantly - malleable! Ideas anyone can suit to their own hearth, tastes and table. Another stunner!

Shipshapeeatworthy says

From the Oven to the Table follows the familiar big flavours and ingredients as well as gorgeous photography present in Henry's other cookbooks but in all honesty, I found the approach much simpler with this book. A well-stocked pantry and some good-quality sheet pans, roasters, gratin dishes, or the like will have you on your way to getting a meal made with minimal effort. And, after reading her introduction I feel like this cookbook was really written over the past couple of decades, born from the Monday-to-Friday-get-a-meal-on-the-table situations that Henry experienced cooking for her own family. I really appreciate that she understands how busy life is and has offered recipes that are virtually "hands off" -- the tagline for the book after all is "simple dishes that look after themselves." What I've found with the recipes I've tried is that you prep the ingredients, get them in a pan, stick them in the oven, and voila! Instead of actively cooking, standing at the stove I used that time my dinner was roasting or baking to tidy-up the kitchen and have a quick sit down in my favourite chair by the window. Maybe a bit gratuitous for a Monday night but it feels mighty nice to not toil over the stove, eat, and then trudge back to the kitchen to clean up everything.

The recipes are organized into seven chapters: Simple Suppers (sausages, chops, fish fillets, & the like), My Favourite Ingredient (chicken thighs forever), Asparagus to Zucchini (spring & summer vegetables), Beets & Bitter Greens (autumn & winter vegetables), Cook Until Tender (grains & legumes), Weekends & Holidays (roasts, birds, & whole fish), and Something Sweet (desserts & cake). Aside from some specialty grocery items such as miso or preserved lemons, all the ingredients I needed for the recipes I made are found at the local market or grocery store. While none of Diana Henry's cookbooks are special diet books, I found more than enough vegetarian-based recipes to suit my family. If you're looking for vegan or gluten-free recipes, it's just a matter of hunting them out in the book (there is no index or special symbols).

It wasn't just me who enjoyed cooking from this book! There were recipes that even my 5-year-old daughter helped with, which really helps her to feel some agency about what we're eating. One day after school I decided we'd have the White Beans & Roasted Tomatoes w/ Capers, Mint, & Chili Dressing and once I'd gotten the tomatoes into the oven, I had my daughter measure and whisk the dressing. Then, together we mixed all the components in a large serving bowl and I served the dish with warmed flatbread. A little spicy, a touch cool, sweet and mellow this recipe is bold on flavour with minimal ingredients. It was also a recipe that my daughter enjoyed -- maybe if I'd made and served a dish with mint, chili, capers, and garlic she'd have been a bit more resistant to trying it but as it was she "sampled" the ingredients as she added them to the dressing and was pleased to have "made" dinner that night.

Most certainly things like pizza, pasta, and pot pies are baked in the oven but this is not what Henry's book focuses on. From the Oven to the Table is really about roasting or baking ingredients -- beans/legumes, grains, fruit, and vegetables for the meatless crowd and, people who delve into "meatier" cooking will appreciate that she chooses mostly chicken, fish, or lamb (with some pork or beef) that are (as I understand) easy to cook in the oven with good results. Some dishes I tried needed a bit of advanced prep -- such as soaking the beans for the Oven-Baked Beans w/ Rosemary & Chili but really all I did was put the dried beans in water the night before and let them soak until I was ready to bake dinner the next day. Whereas a recipe like the Baked Sweet Potato w/ Avocado & Chimichurri could be made on the fly.

I enjoyed the leftovers -- hearty and delicious, I found that dishes such as the baked beans or the Roasted Autumn Vegetables w/ Walnut-Miso Sauce were perfect spooned or smashed on toast the next day. I always consider recipes that leave enough for leftovers the best -- it's like giving your future-self a little helping hand. And, I'm not sure about you but I often find that with roasted vegetables the flavour only gets better the day after you've made it. This is especially true for the Roasted Indian-Spiced Vegetables w/ Lime-Cilantro Butter. Having just a small amount leftover the next day I made some rice so that we could all enjoy a bit of those delicious spiced roasted veggies.

Just as in her other cookbooks, she uses fruit to perfection -- sometimes doing nothing more than roasting them. I made the Ginger-Roasted Plums w/ Lime, Rum & Brown Sugar Cream a couple of times because I loved the flavour of the roasted fruit with the lush, coolness of the cream (and, the brown sugar does indeed become "soft and molasses-like" after it's sat on top of the cream/yogurt mixture). With all the elaborate baking books out there, I feel that fruit is often overlooked as a dessert. The beauty of this ingredient is that not much needs to be done to it in order to enhance its flavour save a bit of time in the oven. Henry perfectly recognizes this, and her fruit-based dessert recipes really reflect this. There are delicious-looking recipes for a Chocolate & Red Wine Cake and Baked Rice Pudding w/ Quince Jelly & Blackberries I can't wait to try too.

What From the Oven to the Table offers is casual, easy cooking at its best. Nothing fussy and recipes that anyone with an oven can make (no special culinary skills required). Just as in Henry's other cookbooks, she really homes in on producing a final dish that's full of flavour. With a dozen cookbooks to her name, From the Oven to the Table follows in step with the kinds of recipes that home cooks have come to expect from Henry (without feeling you're getting one cookbook over and over again).

Please note that this is an excerpt of a review posted to www.shipshapeeatworthy.wordpress.com

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Manda Books for providing me with a free advanced copy of this book. I did not receive monetary compensation for my post, and all thoughts and opinions are my own.

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From reader reviews:

Donna Jost:

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